

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the tenth paragraph on page 8, spanning lines 18-19, with the following amended paragraph:

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of the stabilization plate shown in **FIG. 8** **FIG. 7**, taken along line **9-9** as viewed in the direction of the arrows.

Please replace the first and second full paragraphs on page 14, spanning lines 4-20, with the following amended paragraphs:

However, with this embodiment, the non-threaded portion **57** of the stem **56** defines a vertical slot **58** configured to receive the stabilization rod **R** therethrough. Preferably, the width of the slot is close to the outer diameter of the rod, while the vertical height of the slot is greater than the diameter. As can be seen in the figures, the rod **R** passes through the vertical slot **58** and is sandwiched between opposite sleeves **65_U** and **65_L**. Both sleeves are preferably formed of an elastomeric material that is resiliently compressed as the bone anchor **52** pivots in the direction indicated by the arrows in **FIG. 5**. The sleeves **65_U** and **65_L** **65** define a bore **66** through which the stem **56** of the bone anchor **52** extends.

As with the previous embodiment, the nut **60** is used to change the dynamic flexibility of the connector **50** by adjusting the amount that the resilient sleeves **65_U** and **65_L** **65** are compressed. A washer (not shown) is provided between the nut **60** and the uppermost sleeve **65_U** so that tightening the nut does not compromise the integrity of the sleeve. The dynamic flexibility of the connector **50** may also be adjusted by using sleeves having different thicknesses or different elastomeric material properties. The elongated slot **58** may be sized to accommodate an expected range of thicknesses of the lowermost sleeve **65_L**.

Please replace the first full paragraph on page 15, spanning lines 7-14, with the following:

In order to provide the dynamic flexibility feature of the present invention, the plate **80** includes a plurality of elastomeric bushings **85** that are pressed into a corresponding one of the openings **83**. As shown in **FIG. 9**, the bushings **85** include a central collar **84** that is sized to fit within an opening **83**, preferably snugly. The collar defines a bore **91** for receiving the stem **56** of the anchor **52** therethrough and an outer surface **89** that may contact the corresponding opening **83** of the plate. The collar terminates at its ends in upper and lower head portions **87_U**, **87_L** that are larger than the openings **83** in the plate **80** to trap the bushing **85** within the opening. The head portions **87_U** and **87_L** may bear directly against the outer surface **81** of the plate **80**.

Please replace the second full paragraph on page 15, spanning lines 15-19, with the following:

The lower head portion **87_L** is supported on the intermediate portion **55** of the anchor, which the nut **60** bears against the upper head portion **87_U**. The two head portions **87_L** and **87_U** are compressed by tightening the nut **60** onto the stem **56** of the bone anchor **52**, to thereby increase the rigidity (or decrease the dynamic flexibility) of the plate-to-bone anchor interface.